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Candidate name:
ASARE-KONADU, CHRISTINA (No. 100)

**THERE IS NO CHILD LABOUR IN GHANA: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF
HOW PARENTS AND CHILDREN EXPERIENCE CHILD LABOUR IN
GHANA.**

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To my parents and siblings, you are simply amazing. Kojo, Mercy, Michael and Kwabee, you are all stars! For all the children in Ghana undergoing any form of child labour under the pretense of culture, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to explore and understand the concept of child labour from a Ghanaian context by looking at how parents understand child labour. Further by letting the Ghanaian child explain how they understand child labour and how they experience the phenomenon in their everyday lives. Prior to embarking on my field exercise, relevant literature on child labour was reviewed and analyzed. Primary data was obtained during my field research which took place in three communities with different socio-economic ratio in Ghana between June -July 2017. During this field exercise, parents both men and women, single and married were interviewed. I used open ended in-depth interviews to access relevant data for my thesis analyzes. Children who were allowed to work in the home and out of home were also interviewed. After collecting my primary data, theories such as the strength perspective, social construction of reality by Berger and Luckmann, gender theories by Zimmerman was used to throw more light on my data to better help readers understand the views of my respondents.

The findings showed that child labour is experienced differently by children and parents from different educational, cultural and economic backgrounds. People from different backgrounds experienced child labour differently and had varying ideas about what types of work activities performed by children is child labour. Secondly social context as touched on by Fook, played a major role underlying the varying understanding of what constitutes child labor. It was also found out that poverty does not necessarily have a positive relationship with child labour in the Ghanaian community as projected by most European writers. Poverty has a relationship with child labour, however from the responses garnered during my field research, most Ghanaian attributed the prevalence of child labour in Ghana to culture, morals, socialization and religious beliefs. The study suggests that scholars will revisit the existing literature on child labour in Africa and particularly Ghana to find out more from the children who are the center of it all. Finding out more from these children and taking into account the social, cultural and religious context of the population under study will unravel new knowledge and literature to the existing

literature on child labour. This will help child policy advocates and social workers working with children to better understand how to effectively address the problem of child labour.

Key words: child labour, child work, Ghana, culture, social context, culture, socialization, social problem.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Understanding Child Labour: African versus European Context

Growing up in Kumasi, a city in Ghana, I did household chores that my mother told me to because it was my responsibility as a Ghanaian child to be obedient and respectful to my parents' authority in the house. Furthermore, engaging in simple household chores are part of the 'proper' home training all Ghanaian children are expected to receive during their primary socialization process. These are mostly the values a Ghanaian child is taught growing up. Child work such as sweeping the house compound, washing the dishes after each meal, fetching water from a nearby stream and taking care of my younger siblings were part of my daily routine. This is a process of socialisation for every Ghanaian child, however child work in the Ghanaian community is divided according to gender. The girl child usually learns how to cook by being in the kitchen anytime her mother is cooking whereas the male child learns household chores such as weeding and 'men's work' from their fathers or any type of household chore that is too 'heavy' for the girls to perform.

When I grew up, I was thankful to my parents for teaching me how to maintain and keep my future home and being a responsible and hardworking young woman. That was my socialisation and I did not question this taken for granted assumptions because I did not have any other socialisation process to compare it with.

Since I travelled to Norway to pursue my master's degree and being exposed to a different culture and socialisation process, has challenged my preconceived ideas on childhood and the definition of child work. In Norway, I have had encounters with Africans from Ethiopia, Egypt, Eritrea, Congo, Liberia, Nigeria and Kenya. We mostly have lengthy conversations about growing up in Africa, our socialisation process and childhood experiences. We talked about the work we did as children and how it has helped us to be responsible and hardworking adults. Most of these Africans said they were not from poor homes and that it was part of their culture

and if they could redo their childhood, they would never change a thing. To them, Child work is an essential part of childhood in Africa, thus the advantages of child work when growing up outweighs the disadvantages.

On the other hand, when I had the same conversation with regards to what I thought was child work with some Norwegian friends, they argued otherwise. The general sentiment conveyed by them was that which I described constituted child labour and not child work. They could not understand why a child should be 'forced' to work against-his or her will and attributed the concept of child labour as an outcome of poverty.

Such contrasting views on what Child labour is to the African and a section of Norwegians provoked my intellectual curiosity thus factoring my decision to investigate this phenomenon. I began to analyse child labour as not entirely an outcome of poverty in Africa, because even if children in Ghana were not from poor families, they engaged in some sort of child work. I decided then to investigate how child labour is understood and experience by children and parents in a Ghanaian context.

Child labour exists in Africa nonetheless, what African societies consider as child labour is different from the Western world (Admassie, 2002; Bass 2004; Nukunya, 2003). Furthermore, Child labour is seen as an intricate part of African culture, an often-cited reason why it is upheld and also for its endurance over time. As such, to Africans and particularly Ghanaians, not all work done by children is seen as detrimental to their wellbeing since some sort of 'child labour' is perceived as part of their socialization process and cultural belief system (Nukunya, 2003). According to Bass (2004) in African communities, child labour is seen as a mixed blessing, such that as household juggle to keep their finances afloat, children engaging in petty trading and part -time work after school and on weekends adds extra income to subsidise the household expenses. Therefore, to most Africans not all work done by children is perceived as detrimental to their wellbeing of the child (Nukunya, 2003).

1.2 Definitions of Key Concepts

Child: In line with the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is an individual under the age of 18 (Uniceforg, 2018). UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) urges all countries to increase the level of protection for their children. This applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis (Uniceforg, 2018). As such, the best interest of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that affects them. UNICEF encourages parents, governments and policy to engage when making decisions regarding their wellbeing (ibid).

Child Labour: Any type of work that is detrimental or is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. According to Martin (2003), Children all over the world can be found at work at one point in their lives. Working at home or outside of the home is part of the child's life (ibid). Work can help to develop moral character, increase self-esteem and instill responsibility (Martin, 2003; Nukunya, 2003). Likewise, Edmonds (2009) and Martin (2003), light work such as performing household chores such as sweeping, cleaning etc. that is not detrimental to education, performed only a few hours a week, can be used as a tool to promote a child's development.

However, there is no usually agreed definition of child labour. Nonetheless, in common parlance, work or activities that considered harmful to the wellbeing of children could be defined as child labour (Edmonds, 2009). Likewise, Martin (2003) and Bass (2004) claim that

any type of work that impedes the child development and subjects the child to harm and intolerable risk is termed child labour.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has a somehow universally accepted definition of child labour. It defines child labour as any type of work that is detrimental or is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development" (1989, Article 32). In this study, we will use the definition cited by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child work: Services rendered by and for household members without pay. They are more commonly referred to as 'household chores' and include activities such as cooking, ironing, housecleaning, shopping, looking after children, small repairs and the like (Uniceforg,2018). World Vision Canada in their report on child labour retrieved from Piningcom (2018), defines child work as any type of work done by children after school and or during holidays which is safe, age-appropriate for a couple of hours. During these times of child work, children are allowed to go to school, play and rest (ibid). A report about child work and child labour in Botswana by United Nation Children's Fund defines child work as any work activities done by children that are not necessarily considered harmful. Child work includes activities done in support of family business, paid work and chores (ibid). Moreover, Lucas (2015) defines child labour as any type of work activities that contributes to the child's development by providing them with skills and experiences. These skills and experiences is mainly to prepare children and groom them into productive members of adult society (ibid). In doing all these work activities, children are able to attend school, play, rest and are not harmful to their wellbeing.

However, in this study, the definition of child work will be considered as any type of services rendered by and for household members without pay (Uniceforg, 2018). They are more

commonly referred to as 'household chores' and include activities such as cooking, ironing, housecleaning, shopping, looking after children and small repair works (ibid).

1.3 Child Labour: A non-existent concept to the African

According to Bass (2004) the concept we use to talk about children and work, when you look at the many languages in Africa... does not convey any negative perceptions. In many African countries, many people have employed children in the labour sector due to the fact that no negative connotation is associated with child labour (Bass, 2004). Darko (2008) adds that child labour in Ghana is seen as a form of training that every Ghanaian child should have to pass through. Moreover, child labour is an intricate phenomenon deeply rooted in cultural, social and economic structures of African societies (Admassie, 2002).

A key factor that tends to sustain child labour in Ghana despite several attempts to eliminate it is socialization (Takyi, 2014). Socialization is the process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions that enable them to participate as more or less effective members of groups and societies (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The continuous existence of any society depends on the ability of the society to socialize its children in the art of survival and cultural perpetuation (Sosyalarastirmalarcom, 2017). Therefore, it is crucial for African societies who see some form of child labour as a socialisation process and a cultural practice to push for the continuity of the practice (Bass, 2004; Admassie 2002 & Ampomaah, 2012).

According to Bass (2004), child labour to the African is a process of instilling discipline, responsibility and a gateway of producing future leaders that are positive and exemplary leaders of the future society. Bass continues to argue that rather than child labour engendering a negative connotation, it represents a form of social reproduction and useful training for children as they transition to adulthood in most African societies.

1.4 Problem Statement

The concept of Child labour, its causes and effects have been documented extensively in

scholarly literature both in the Western and other parts of the world. However, some scholars argue that pertaining to Child labour in the African society, in most cases is a product of poverty (Naeem, Shaukat & Ahmed, 2011). Previous studies show that children work mostly because of poverty and thus poor households are more likely to send their children to work instead of school (ibid).

The faces of child labour are many, differing from region to region, country to country and community to community (Admassie, 2002; Edmonds, 2009 & Bass 2004). Given the complex nature of child labour, it is important to look at the problem within a socio-economic context, through the lens of culture and tradition, in order to completely understand the trends of the phenomenon. A holistic understanding of child labour, including the knowledge of where the problem is rooted, is indispensable for developing sustainable methods for combating this unfortunate phenomenon (Edmonds, 2009). When writers and policy makers are dealing with a social problem such as child labour, it is advisable to take into account the social context for a better understanding of the problem.

These are the two main research questions that the study seeks to answer:

- How do children and parents in Ghana understand and experience child labour in their daily lives?
- In what ways have parents encourage or discourage the involvement of their children in child labour?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Primarily, the study investigates and explores the cultural concept of child labour and child work in Ghana. While various scholars claim that child labour in Ghana is due to poverty, however, in this thesis I investigate whether this is indeed the case by capturing the undiluted and contextual understanding of child labour from the angle of both the Ghanaian parent and child. In this regard, the study delves into parents' in Ghana's views about child labour, their

perspectives on the phenomenon and how they feel about its practise in Ghana. This gives room for parents and children to exchange ideas regarding what constitutes the main causes of child labour.

Further, I explore the varying misconceptions and conceptions that western literature have depicted regarding child labour in Africa, juxtaposing such conceptions with that of a section of Ghanaian parents and children, using the International Labour Organisation's definition child labour as a yardstick. In this way, the study contributes to a deeper understanding and scholarly knowledge on the concept of child labour in Ghana, taking into consideration other reasons such as culture and religious beliefs that possibly uphold the practice.

1.6 Organisation of the study

The next parts and chapters of the study is as follows. The immediate part of the thesis will touch on Child Labour in Africa. What the African thinks when the terminology is mentioned. This is followed by a section on the key concepts and terms that will be used in this study. Then Chapter 2 follows with A Review of Previous studies, Theoretical Framework follows suit in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 will describe the Methodology and Research design employed in the dissertation.

In Chapter 5, I present, analyse and discuss the findings of my field interviews. The chapter delves deeper into the cultural, social and religious conceptions and views on Child Labour in Ghana. It explores the norms, values and preconceived ideas that have and continue to uphold the practice of Child Labour in Ghana. I also explore the views of the Ghanaian parent both rich and poor on their take on child labour in the society and the Ghanaian child on how child labour has contributed or hindered their wellbeing. By analysing their views, I will gain insight into how they understand and experience child labour in their lives and thus contribute to filling a research gap of the misinterpretation of the concept in a Ghanaian context. Participants' own interpretation of how child labour has contributed or hindered their wellbeing will also be

looked at. Chapter six concludes my study. In this chapter, I put forth my own observation during my research study, my views and intellectual opinions garnered throughout the research process.

CHAPTER 2: PREVIOUS STUDIES

2.1 Introduction

On the empirical front, there is an extensive research literature of child labour and child work, mostly trying to understand and analyse the determinants of these two phenomena in the hopes of shedding light on what direction policy should be aimed at (Boozer & Suri, 2001).

Many national and international organizations concur regarding the importance of protecting children from any form of labour that is likely to be harmful to their development. Despite this, the number of children who are still toiling in the labour markets in particularly developing countries keep soaring (Admassie, 2002). This informs the growing scholarly interest in identifying the reasons and contextual realities of child labour in recent times.

This chapter provides literature on perspectives of child labour based on the position of parents and children in Ghana and Africa. It further looks into the negative connotations attached to the concept of child labour in Africa. Literature is reviewed on studies that have been conducted regarding the varying angles and perspectives of research on child labour in Africa. Also, previous research is reviewed and analysed regarding the factors for child labour in Ghana as well as the advantages and disadvantages of child labour in developing contexts. Finally, the chapter reviews previous studies that have distinguished the differences and similarities of child work and child labour and which one of these phenomena is widely practiced in Ghana.

2.2 Child Labour Now and Then

Knowing and understanding the genesis of child labour and how it changed or remained the same throughout history is very crucial to the understanding of the phenomenon. (Lemins, DeVries & Furnish, 2009) agree by writing that in order to critically analyse, assert and understand social phenomena, there is a need to know its past to understand its present and possibly predict its future. Therefore, this section of the study presents a historical and contemporary review of child labour.

Child Labour is not a new phenomenon. It has existed in every part of the world throughout history (Sinha, 2007). In a more recent history, child labour was a product of the 19th and early 20th century industrial revolution, when children were forced to work in hazardous conditions for a maximum 12 hour a day (Canagarajah & Nielsen 1999). During this period, child labour held no negative conception (Ampomaah, 2012). argued that the highest occurrence of child labour in contemporary times is in developing countries. A study conducted by the International Labour Organization in (2017) revealed an estimated 246 million children aged 5-17 years are engaged in child labour around the world. Of these, some 179 million are caught in the worst forms of child labour. When this 246 million is divided among the six continents of the world, Africa has an estimated 80-100 million out of this 246 million children active in the labour market (Harsch, 2001). This means Africa has the greatest incidence of economically active children; 44% of children are in the labour market and on average, more than 30% of African children between 10 and 14 are agricultural workers (ILOorg, 2017; Bongaarts, Lardoux & McNichol, 2005).

Sinha (2007) writes that child labour in recent times was a product of the 19th and early 20th century industrial revolution, when children were forced to work in hazardous conditions for a maximum of 12 hours a day. During this period, child labour held no negative conception (Ampomaah, 2003). Explaining the absence of negative conception of child labour, Williamson (1991) claims that during the industrial revolution, adult labour was scarce in most rural areas and since these factories operated on water power, they recruited child labour in such situations. Ampomaah (2012) also argues that the upsurge in child labour during the industrial revolution was because employing children in these factories was relatively cheaper compared to adult labour force. As such, factory owners could reduce the cost of labour and increase profit margins.

On a different note, Humphries (2012) also interpreted the rise in the number of child workers

in this century to the appearance of a new equilibrium. This new equilibrium was related to many co-incidental developments including an increase in the relative productivity of children because of mechanization, new divisions of labour, and changes in the organization of work; the dynamics of competitive dependence linking labour market and families; high dependency ratios within families; stumbling male wages and pockets of poverty; family instability; and breadwinner frailty. The establishment of these links thus forged new synchronization between revised views of the industrial revolution and a revisionist history of child labour (Humphries, 2012). In addition, Bullen (1986) argues that in the late nineteenth century there was a conventional wisdom that all members of a farm family, including children, should contribute to the successful functioning of the household economy. This assertion justified the prevalence of child labour throughout that time. However, many contemporary researchers argued that this conventional wisdom would not have applied to families in urban-industrial areas during the late nineteenth century (Bullen, 1986).

According to Sinha (2007), an increase in the number of child labourers in the early eighteenth and late nineteenth century in Europe and North America was overwhelming. In 1860, more than 50% of children in England between the ages of 5 and 15 were full-time workers at a farm or a factory (ibid). In the early nineteenth century, child workers constituted one third of the Labour force in United States factories (Sinha, 2007). In Canada, about 80% of the rural population migrated to urban centres in the wake of the industrial revolution to work in factories (Bullen, 1986). With an increase in rural-urban migration came urbanisation. Bullen (1986) writes that at the height of the industrial revolution came urbanisation, such that in the nineteenth century the population in Ontario, Canada's capital grew roughly three times the rate of the general population. As such finding work was nearly impossible. Therefore, families had to resort to any means necessary to cater for its members' needs (Bullen, 1986). Thus, children had to work to support their families.

Further, to contribute their quota to the family's upkeep, children gathered coal and wood for fuel from rail and factory yards, catered for sick family members and often worked in their stead (Bullen, 2007). Furthermore, Humphries (2012) claims that child labour was less expensive compared to adult labour at that time. Thus, factory owners preferred employing children rather than adults to maximise profit. This resulted in an increase in the number of child workers during this era (ibid). Williamson (1991) writes that increased child labour during the industrial revolution era was because the returns of educational capital were much lower than now, therefore opportunities for schooling could not pull children out of the labour market as compared to today where there is a far greater commitment to schooling and literacy because schooling and literacy returns outweighs Child labour.

On the other hand, studies on child labour in contemporary times attributes the existence of the practice not far from what it was in the industrial revolution. Sinha (2007) claims that poverty is the backbone of child labour in these modern times and has not changed since the industrial revolution. He believes that is the reason why high incidence of child labour in this century is in developing countries specifically in Africa. However, he argues that though the link between child labour and poverty is inevitable, child labour is not a product of poverty alone and poverty does not automatically create child labour. Agreeing with this statement, Krauss (2013) opines that child labour is beyond poverty and urges child labour studies should extend beyond this façade to uncover the underlying factors such as social norms, belief systems, and culture that have sustained child labour, particularly in African societies.

2.3 Causes of Child Labour

2.3.1 Poverty: African countries are among some of the poorest in the world (Bass, 2004 p.4).

A majority of sub-Saharan African countries which Ghana is part, thirty five out of forty-one, are among the poorest countries in the world (ibid). According to Bass (2004) the wealthiest countries in the world have less or no incidence of child labour. Additionally, most research on child labour mentions poverty as a key determinant of the practice. According to Blunch &

Verner (2001), the link between poverty and child labour has traditionally been regarded a well-established fact. In their study on child labour and schooling in Ghana, Blunch & Verner found out that the socio-economic status of households in Ghana is an important determinant of child labour. Children from poor households were more likely to engage in child labour as compared to children from wealthy households (ibid). Thus, poverty affects the likelihood of children engaging in child labour and as such confirms the belief of a positive relationship that is well known to exist between child labour and poverty (Blunch & Verner, 2001).

Admassie (2002) claims that when households are faced with poverty without any external support from the government or extended family members, they last option is to send their children to work outside of the house to earn extra income to support the household financial budget. Adding her voice to this argument is Bass (2004) who claims that is an undeniable fact that poverty and inequality created by Africa's internal corruption and inauspicious position in the global economic system is a fundamental factor of Child labour in the continent. The lack of welfare support, unemployment and high fertility rates in most African countries have led parents to push their children into child labour. However, Canagarajah & Coulombe (1997) found that contrary to most beliefs, poverty is not the primary determinant of child labour, though it may have indirect consequences such as its effect on quality schooling. Likewise, Bhalotra (1999) concurs poverty as unlikely to be the sole cause of child labour. Bhalotra argues that this 'poverty hypothesis' in a situation where the wage elasticity of child labour is negative, in such case improving the returns to education is unlikely to have substantial impact on child labour. Also, Bass (2004) argues that though higher rates of poverty are associated with higher rates of child labour, poverty is not the primary and only cause of child labour especially in African countries. For example, Boozer & Suri (2001) conducted a research study on child labour and schooling, they found little evidence of poverty playing a huge role in the effects of child labour in Ghana. Therefore, for Ghana, policies aimed at alleviating poverty may not be

appropriate in alleviating child labour.

Bass (2004) ask readers to consider the influence of the various religions in African countries and their effect on child work ethics during the primary socialization process. She claims that these religious beliefs have reshaped the concept of what education is, cultural values and what society teaches its young populace (ibid). These factors and other factors such as urbanisation, democratisation and the transformation of the extended family structure define childhood and child labour in Africa.

2.3.2 Other causes of Child Labour

A number of studies for example that of Canagarajah & Coulombe (1997) found that contrary to most beliefs, poverty is not the primary determinant of child labour, though it may have indirect consequences such as its effect on quality schooling. Bhalotra (1999) cited in Boozer & Suri (2001) considers this poverty belief as unlikely to be the sole cause of child labour. Bhalotra argues that this 'poverty hypothesis' in a situation where the wage elasticity of child labour is negative, in such case improving the returns to education is unlikely to have substantial impact on child labour. Also, Bass (2004) argues that though higher rates of poverty are associated with higher rates of child labour, poverty is not the primary and only cause of child labour especially in African countries. For example, Boozer & Suri (2001) conducted a research study on child labour and schooling, they found little evidence of poverty playing a huge role in the effects of child labour in Ghana. Therefore, for Ghana, policies aimed at alleviating poverty may not be appropriate in alleviating child labour (ibid).

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child work in Africa (Bass, 2004). It is noteworthy that children assisting parents in their spare time (on holidays from school, after school hours, weekends) is not considered child labour. It becomes child labour only when it impedes on their educational, moral and psychological wellbeing and when the activity is also harmful to his or her health (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2014).

There have consequently been attempts to distinguish “child work,” which is benign, from “child labour,” which is harmful work. Such a distinction enables us to acknowledge that work can sometimes be beneficial for children and as such some of the works that children in Africa engage in are not all harmful work (Bourdillon, 2006). Bourdillon claims that even when work interferes with development and education in particular, the harm that children sometimes suffer from when they are thrown out of work is higher than not been in work. For children who need an income, child unemployment is their major problem instead of child labour (Andvig, 1998, p. 327).

Bass (2004) highlighted that child labour is widely assumed to be a part of the African culture and thus many people throw up their hands in resignation, thinking nothing should be done about it. The term “child labour,” however, still evokes images of children being exploited and abused in situations that impede their mental and social development in the western world (Bourdillon, 2006). However, it seems the world have completely forgotten that during the nineteenth century, children worked alongside parents both in the United States of America and in the United Kingdom in order to help the family make ends meet (Bass, 2004).

In most African countries, child work is perceived as an informal training and socialisation as children learn their adult roles as they mature (Bass, 2004). Writing in 2012, Ampomah emphasises the importance of child work in Ghana and African societies because it is a way of training children and giving them some sort of profession for their future life. Bass (2004) argues that child labour is a vital part of childhood in African communities. In addition, child

labour is a way of instilling responsibility and knowledge of a trade or a way of life in Ghana and in most African communities. As such, rather than engender a negative association, the concept of child labour in Africa presents itself as a means of social reproduction, a rite of passage and a socialisation process for children (Bass, 2004; Ampomah, 2012).

According to Grootaert & Kanbur (1995) the westernised depiction of Child labour in Africa is upsetting. The depiction of child labour in most developing countries are drawn from Dickens and the "dark, satanic mills" of the industrial revolution and on the activities of street children of these countries (ibid). They stress that most connotations of child labour in some of these developing countries is child work and not necessarily work that is detrimental to the physical, health and psychological development of the African child per the definition of Child labour by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Bongaarts, Lardoux & McNichol (2005) claims child labour is a social problem and like most social problems, social context, belief systems, culture and norms of the population under study should influence the solutions put in place to fight this social problem

2.4 Child Labour and Child Rights

According to Weston (2006), it is an indisputable fact that the work some children do is an infringement on their rights as children and citizens of humanity. When children engage in child labour, they are deprived of their childhood, health and educational rights thus condemning them to a life of poverty and want (UNICEF, 2017). As such there's a widespread view that child work is somehow problematic to the effective growing up of children, therefore a blanket ban on all forms of child work is the best option for upholding children's rights (child rights international network, 2017). Child rights activists suggest using the right to education and stronger domestic laws for its implementation is an effective way of combating child labour. The introduction of free basic education and offering families substantial subsidies to eliminate the thoughts of sending their children to work rather than school, are available options that can

help uphold child rights and prevent them from engaging in forms of labour (Child Rights International Network, 2017).

However, in countries where it is a given that children will find ways to work even when there is a blanket ban on child labour practices, some commentators argue that it is more beneficial for governments to legalize and regulate child labour activities (ibid). When governments embark on such policies, it will grant these children the same labour and protection rights in work as their adult counterparts and give governments the upper hand to effectively evaluate and analyse the types of labour these children perform.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The study employed different theories in understanding how Ghanaians experience child labour in their daily lives. These theories will also help in analysing my research data. Most of the data analyses will be thoroughly delve into in the next chapter of the study. However, I will give a brief presentation of these theories and how they fit into the study, the purpose they serve for a better understanding of my findings.

The most influential theoretical perspective that captures most of what's said in this thesis is the social construction of reality perspective by Berger and Luckmann. This theoretical perspective throws light on how people and groups interacting in their societies creates, over time, concepts, meanings of each other's' actions, and these concepts, meanings becomes the way of life and reality of this society (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). By employing this theoretical perspective in this study, we can understand how the concepts, meanings, and actions of both parents with regards to child work, over the years have been solidified by the society and has become part of the socialization objective reality of children in Ghana. Sociological theories such as the symbolic interactionism by George Herbert Mead serves as a pivoting tool for the foundations of Social Construction of reality perspective. Mead studied the importance of symbols, language and discourse, customs, morals and beliefs to be part of how societal reality is formed over time. In his study, Mead also attributed the creation of society to be of an objective reality nature. He found out that social order is a human product, or more precisely an ongoing human production which translated into a form of primary socialization of their members.

This study also employs the social construction of reality theory because of how it talks about members of societies being products of their own actions and these actions form part of their

socialization process over time. This theoretical perspective will help us understand how tradition, culture, norms and beliefs regarding child work and child labour finds its roots. Why has it been accepted and practiced over the years by its members.

Another theory that is used in this study is the systems theory. The systems theory takes into account every aspect of the society that contributes to making it a whole. This theory says that the entire society is one living organism and each part of this living organism functions together to make it a whole. From this perspective, the study draws suggestions from Healy (2014) Fook (2002) and Bacchi (1997) that problems always do not have a singular straightforward cause. Fook draws on looking at social context which will be employed in this study to help us understand how Ghanaian culture, morals, the systems that make up the society have shaped how child labour and child work is experienced and understood. Furthermore, I take a closer look at how context is highly influential when analysing what is the root cause of a problem as put forward by Bacchi. Bacchi's thoughts on the importance of context in understanding a social problem will be applied to this study to analyse why child labour is on the rise in Ghana and not in Norway.

Gender theories will also be employed to understand how women are socialised differently in relation to housework and labour, from men. Connell (2009) advocates the importance of understanding the importance of gender in gendered societies. Since the gender of children affects the work they perform both at home and outside the house, it is crucial for this study to analyse the important role played by gender in the Ghanaian society.

This study employs the strength perspective approaches in critical social work practice which emphasises how individual's, irrespective of any kind of social problem they face, emanates strength in one way or the other. In this study, the strength perspective will help readers understand the resiliency found in these children. Most scholars claim that child labour is

negative, which it is. However, Bass (2004) claims that the strength these children gain through hard work such as self-sufficiency, sense of responsibility, resiliency, independence and belongingness should also be looked at. People including these children have the capacity and right to determine what is right for them. Therefore, social workers cannot swoop in to try and abolish a social phenomenon they think it is bad and not look at the advantages it has. Therefore Healy (2014) advocates for collective active partnership between social workers and their clients in order to affect lasting change.

Lastly this study uses stigma and labelling theory by Erving Goffman in understanding how children cannot refuse to do certain tasks when asked by their parents, for fear of being labelled a deviant child or a disrespectful child. Erving Goffman's (1983) work on stigma claims that conceptualized stigma when bestowed on an individual garners negative response from others. In Ghana parents who refuse to allow their children to work are looked down on by other parents in the society. They are stigmatized and labelled as bad parents. Child work is an essential part of the primary socialization process of children in Ghana. In view of this Ghanaian children are expected to be trained and moulded in the early stages of their lives to be hardworking adults in the future.

3.2 Social Construction of Reality

Luckmann and Berger (1966) social construction of reality theory and socialization theory are employed towards understanding the concept of child labour and the root causes of child labour particularly in developing contexts in this study. Specifically, the social construction of reality theory provides valuable theoretical grounding on how externalization, objectification and internalization are directly related moments in the construction of social reality.

Furthermore, the theory proves useful in appreciating how the process of social interaction shapes human conceptions of child labour. In addition, in explaining the causes of child labour, socialization theory provides useful insights into how social networks and institutions influence

learning and acceptance or otherwise of certain patterns of behaviour and practices, that is, child labour. Both theories are expanded on in the following sub-sections.

The central tenet of Berger and Luckmann's (1966) social construction of reality theory is that individuals and groups interact in a social system. Overtime, such interactions result in the creation of concepts or mental representations of each other's actions, with such concepts eventually becoming habituated in the form of reciprocal roles played by the actors in relation to each other. Berger and Luckmann (1966) further suggest that when reciprocal roles are made available to and adopted by the wider society, such reciprocal interactions and roles are institutionalized. In the process, meaning is embedded in society since individual and group conceptions and beliefs of reality become embedded in the institutional fabric of society. As such, reality is said to be socially constructed.

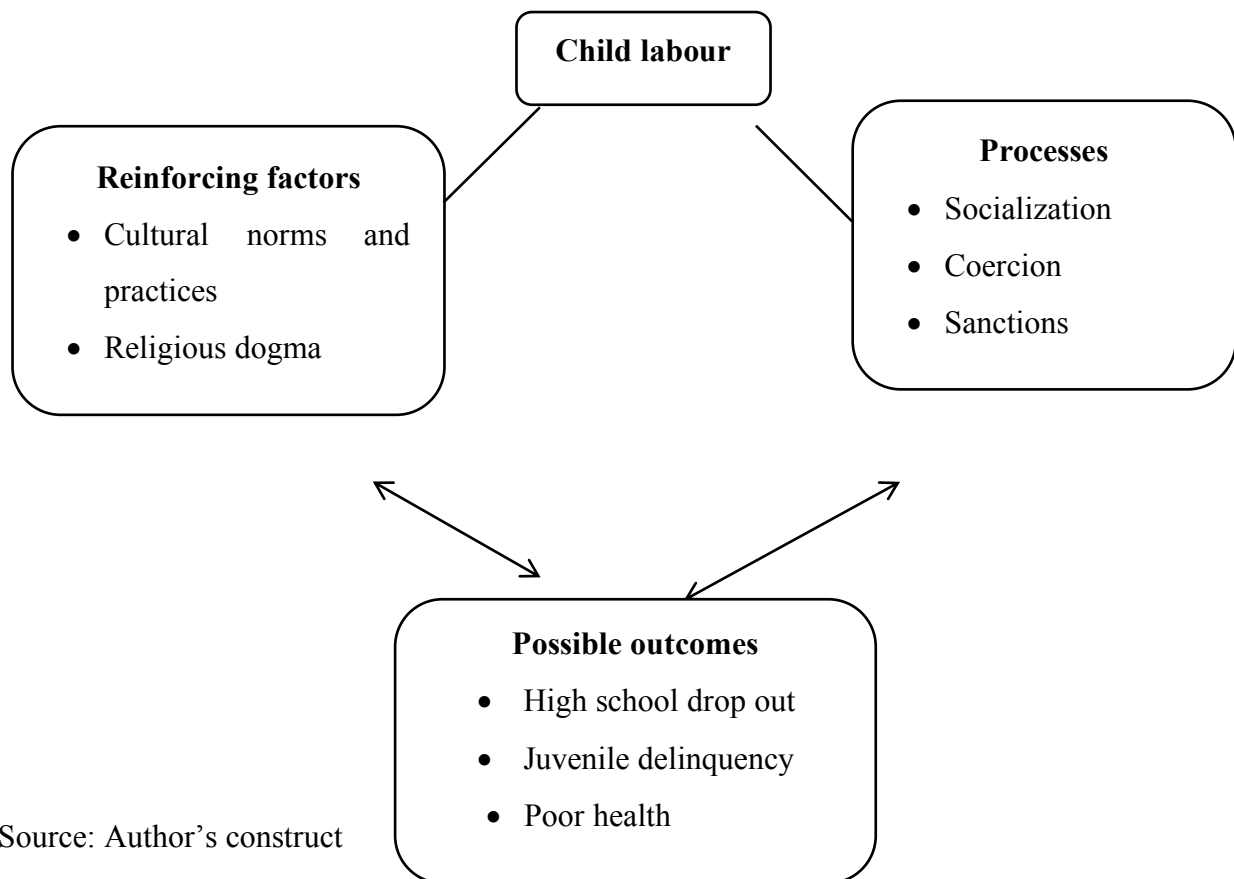
With regards to the construction of social reality, Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that social reality is attained through the processes of externalization, objectification and internalization. Through externalization, they stress that social order is a human product, with regards to both its genesis and existence. Thus, in relation to child labour, it could be argued that child labour is a human product with regards to its genesis, since individuals and groups in society established it. Likewise, the practice of child labour could be considered a human product with regards to its existence, since it would not exist without people to maintain it. From the above, it could thus be argued that human societal and institutional interactions create and maintain pathways for child labour by recognizing the need for it and in the process, institutionalizing the practice.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) further suggest that through objectification, social reality is created. According to Fletcha et al (2001), objectification is the process through which the products of human activity become something external to it through institutionalization and legitimization. Institutionalization is the act of repeated action, which becomes typical over

time and passed from one generation to another till it is perceived as objective (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). With regards to child labour, institutionalization could thus entail the practice where child domestic work is passed down inter-generationally and perceived as useful training for adult life and role, as well as of significance to household income and livelihood augmentation. Likewise, through legitimization, human activity and behaviour becomes normalized and accepted in society. It encompasses all the knowledge and norms that explain and justify institutions and/or practices (Fletcher et al 2001). It is often the case that institutions and actions are justified based on higher mythological, theological, philosophical, scientific knowledge, and cultural norms. Pertaining to child labour, it could thus be argued that religious dogma and cultural norms are used to reinforce the need for children to work as a sign of respect to parents, in preparation towards adult roles, and household income support.

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), the final process through which social reality is attained is internalization. To them, internalization constitutes the subjective construction of human society, although they may seem objective reality. That is, both society and knowledge are human constructs through the process of socialization. On this note, it is important to distinguish between primary and secondary socialization. Primary socialization occurs in individual experiences during childhood, where they become members of society and internalize such society's norms and practices (Fletcher et al 2001). In this regard, child labour could be perceived as a sort of preparation to integrate into adult life. On the other hand, secondary socialization is the process that leads individuals, once socialized, to new sectors in the objective world of their society. Relating this to child labour, it could thus be argued that through the process of continuous social interaction in one's adult life, patterns and perceptions of child labour may become internalized as objective reality and subsequently institutionalized. Berger and Luckmann (1966) state that social construction of theoretical application to child labour practices in Ghana is aptly captured in the following illustration; the illustration below

depicts how social reality and particularly, child labour is the product of externalization, internalization and objectification, captured in the form of reinforcing factors and processes. Firstly, it highlights how through socially defined reinforcing practices such as cultural norms and practices, as well as religious dogma, child labour becomes normalized and institutionalized. Likewise, through the process of primary and secondary socialization, individual and household coercion, and sanctions, the practice of child labour is accepted and passed down inter-generationally. In this regard, possible outcomes due to child labour could be in the form of high school dropout rates, juvenile delinquency and poor health.



3.3 Systems theory (Social Context)

Walker (2012) claims that whatever the social problem at hand, by using systems theory automatically lead asking multiple questions that will be linked to the context of the presenting

problem. In other words, it is an ecological approach in that it assumes not just that individuals are inter-linked within families, but also that families are inter-linked in communities that are in turn inter-linked with classes, ethnic groups, cultures, religious groups and many more (ibid). To me Social workers or any human service workers when dealing with problems should look at it from a different angle. There should be an understanding of the patterns that have created and are maintaining the social problem being studied (Walker, 2012).

Fook (2010) claims that the awareness of individuals' social context is as important as studying the social problem at hand. This is because when social workers understand the social context of the people they are studying, it will help them fully understand and be more critically assertive of the social problem at hand. This view by Fook can also be summed up by the person-in -environment or person-in-situation perspective by Hamilton (1954). According to Cornell (2006), when social workers are dealing with social problems that are part of the social system, socialization process and cultural elements of a community, they need to analyse carefully the structures that contribute to this rather than the individual in question.

In Social work, importance is placed on human behaviour being a product of the environment (Siporin, 1980). The result of this interaction between the environment and the person in it forms a way of life for its members (ibid). Fook (1993) asserts that the understandings of socio-economic structures and historical conditions of a social context influences individual perceptions and experiences in life. Siporin (1980) claims that the interaction and interdependence of these systems on each other creates a common social life, belief system and a way of life that shapes the behaviour of its members. Taking a closer look at most of the responses that I received during my interview processes, it is made evident that both parents and the children believed that working in and out of the house is the normative according to their culture and religious beliefs.

Some studies, also found out that child work issues are extremely context and economy specific and as such general worldwide policies, like sanctions and bans are simply not going to cut it in some parts of the world (Boozer & Suri, 2001; Fook, 2010). With these contradictions and differences in mind, I will be looking at how not just the individual parents and their views on child labour, but the broader social context in question such as the culture elements that exist in Ghana, ethnic groups, belief systems, economic institutions and religion and how they have or have not contributed to the continuity of child labour and child work.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the methods used during the entire research process. It consists of the research design, sampling methods and procedures, tools for data collection and analysis, as well as the limitations and ethical considerations of the study. This section also describes actions taken to investigate this research problem and the rationale for the application of specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyse information applied to understanding the problem. This will allow the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability. The methodology section of a thesis answers two main questions concerning how informants were recruited and how relevant they were to the study, as well as how data generated was analysed.

Silverman (2008) describes research methodology comprises of the choices researchers make about cases to study, methods of data gathering and forms of data analysis in planning and carrying out a research project. Thus, to Silverman, no research method fits all research studies. In view of this Saldana (2011) encourages researchers to examine which forms of data and which research methods will best address the statement of purpose and answer research questions before choosing a research method.

Since the study sought to understand the concept of child labour and child work in Ghana through the experiences of both children and parents, I chose to use semi-structured in-depth interviews as well as participant observation as the method of collecting my research data. I chose these methods because I wanted to know the subjective interpretation of what child labour is in Ghanaian societies and by what standards do parents and children differentiate child work from child labour. Further, I wanted to understand the principals and ideology behind the

socialization process of children in Ghana through work and how both parents and children experience and understand child labour.

Berg (2001) says that a viable research design should always answer three main questions; what will be studied in the research project, why will it be studied and how will the study be conducted. He argues further that the how part of the research design should include the research strategy to be employed, the sampling method used, the area of study and when each stage of the research process will be executed.

4.2 Why use qualitative research methods?

According to Mason (2002) there have been numerous attempts to define qualitative research methods to differentiate it from quantitative research methods. Mason (2002) further argues that, there is no agreed upon decisions on these questions, and as such social researchers should not be deterred by this, because qualitative research – whatever it might be – certainly is not a unified set of techniques or philosophies, and indeed has grown out of a wide range of intellectual and disciplinary traditions.

However, some scholars have still managed to come up with a concrete definition of what qualitative research method is. Berg (2001 p.3) defined qualitative research as the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things.

Hoepfl (1997) claims that qualitative research is used when researchers seeks to understand phenomena in a context-specific setting. Berg (2001) says that when researchers want to study social relations and life-worlds, using qualitative research methods is most appropriate. Life-worlds includes emotions, motivations, symbols, their means, empathy and other subjective aspects associated with naturally evolving lives of individuals and groups which cannot be quantified and or assigned numbers to quantified ‘how much’ emotions an individual or group will show (Berg, 2001). Hence using qualitative research methods is the right choice for

understanding the meaning and rationale behind these social actions depicted as child labour and child work.

Circling back to the above characteristics and what qualitative research can do, I chose this method because my research focuses on understanding the meaning and reasons parents and children in Ghana have with regards to child work and child labour. To Rubin & Rubin (2005) there is a distinctive way to ascertain whether one's research study will be a qualitative or quantitative one. For instance, if one wants to find out how many people purchased an item in the first quarter of 2017, this can be counted and require no explanations. However, if another researcher wants to find out the reasons and explain why those buyers patronized that commodity, then there is the need for the use of qualitative research methods in answering these questions.

In view of this, qualitative method was the best choice in my study because my research objective of understanding the subjective meaning behind child labour and child work in the Ghanaian society can be answered with the use of these methods. This study thus looked for concepts, meanings and individuals' perceptions, understanding and subjective apprehensions, in relation to child work and child labour in Ghanaian societies (Berg, 2001). Therefore, choosing qualitative methods in this study will help me capture, understand and interpret the subjective meanings and rationale ascribed to child labour and child work in the socialization process of children in Ghanaian societies.

4.3 Study Area

Kumasi is the second largest city in Ghana and the longest surviving monarchy in Ghana since 1680 (Dzorgbo, 2013). It is the city host of the largest agricultural activities, mining and the second largest manufacturing city in Ghana. In view of this most people from all parts of Ghana tends to choose Kumasi as their first steps when seeking greener pastures before moving on to

other parts of the country such as the capital, Accra. As such labour is in higher demand compared to other parts of the country aside from Accra.

Kumasi is also among a few cities in Ghana where cultural practices, traditional festivals, Kingship and inheritance is still predominantly practiced and holds the utmost importance. In a nutshell, the people of Kumasi are deeply rooted in their traditional practices, socialization process and maintenance of their culture and belief systems. Kumasi therefore served as the most suitable research area to generate quality data with regards to my research topic.

Secondly, language is an important tool when conducting any kind of research, most especially in a qualitative study. Given the fact that I come from Kumasi, have lived there for more than twenty years and speak the same language, I deem it more beneficial and practical to conduct the study in Kumasi. I anticipated that using random, but convenience sampling would help me capture views across various ethnic groups and geographical locations in Kumasi, that is upscale rich neighbourhoods in Kumasi and also neighbourhoods called locally as ‘Zongos’ (*a local name given to communities perceived as ghettos*). However, due to time constraints this idea was not feasible.

Further, Kumasi is known to be flooded with children engaged in child labour and child work, both at home and in the city centres. Also, since Kumasi is a major traveling destination for people seeking greener pastures, and the largest economic, agricultural and mining city of the country, there is diversity in the population. Therefore, I managed to speak with a wide range of participants hailing from different parts of the country also other than Kumasi.

4.4 Sampling and Sampling techniques

Before starting my field study, I had planned on conducting unstructured in-depth interviews using a sample size of twelve persons; seven (7) adults and five (5) children from the ages of seven (7) to sixteen (16). However, during field interviews, I quickly discovered that my target age group did not yield adequate data to answer my research questions. Therefore, I consulted

my research supervisor and we came up with an idea of raising the age bar of the children from 7 to 10 years. This was because, the first children I interviewed were mostly between the ages of 7 to 9 years old. They were either too shy to talk and had no child work and or child labour experience. They were also very playful and distracted during the interviewing process and frequently looked to their parents for responds the questions being asked.

Secondly, my initial interview plan was to interview only female parents because in Ghana, almost everything about housework, household chores, child work and child labour is the primary responsibility of the mother. However, I had to engage male parents in the interviewing process when I discovered in present day Ghana, some men are staying at home to take care of their children while their wives went out to work due to western acculturation and change in educational backgrounds. Thus, some women do have higher degrees of education than their husbands and so they earn more money and hold higher positions in the work places. This was not the situation about ten years ago.

Further as the interviewing process progressed, I figured out the similarities between the responses I received, so I decided to engage in focus group discussions of male parents and embark on participant observations.

4.4.1 Unstructured Interviews

With regards to the exploratory nature of my research study and the data needed to answer my research questions, I decided to conduct Unstructured interviews. I chose this approach because it is more like a conversation between both the interviewee and interviewer, less restricting compared to structured interviews (Descombe, 2005). Unstructured interviews are open-ended, flexible, with a conversational approach which is more likely to help better access interviewees' views, interpretations of social problems, beliefs, assumptions and experiences which is necessary in most qualitative research project (Silverman, 2013). According to Bryman (2004) unstructured interview is ideal for research topics that tend to find out the experiences of

respondents with regards to a given social problem. This give respondents the opportunities to narrate their own stories without constraints and in their own voices, ideals and perspectives. This conversational approach I felt would enable my respondents, especially the children talk freely without feeling pressured. This created a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere allowing them to freely express themselves. Further, since questions are not tight and restricting, research topics dealing with religion, beliefs and culture is ideal for this type of research interviews (Bryman, 2004). However, a disadvantage of this approach is that respondents tend to ‘talk away’ and the research interview can easily de rile into a subject that is nowhere near what the researcher is interested in. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the researcher to steer the entire interview process towards the right direction (Silverman, 2013).

4.4.2 Focus Groups Discussion

A focus group is either a formal or an informal gathering of homogenous or varied persons who interact with each other by trying to respond to questions and thereby providing useful information. In this method, the researcher becomes more of a moderator than an interviewer (Bell, 2005). During my data collection stage in this study, I decided to conduct focus group interviews of male parents and pick up their subjective interpretations and meanings they ascribe to child work and child labour. During the focus group discussions, I manage to gather data on the collective conscience and perspectives behind child work, child labour and socialization of children in the Ghanaian context from the view of these men. Further there was an atmosphere of calmness for the men to talk since they felt they were in the same boat and with similar perspective with regards to being a stay at home dad which is not a popular topic in the Ghanaian society.

However, one disadvantage of conducting focus group discussions was that it was difficult sometimes to hear each one of them talk because some people were louder than the others. As such they either talked over each other or were more active than the others and at times looked

like the same peoples' voices were heard and none else. Nonetheless, since I was interested in ascertaining jointly constructed knowledge and meanings ascribed to child work and child labour, focus group discussions were deemed necessary.

4.4.3 Participant Observation

Saldana (2011) writes that the main goal of using participant observation as a data collection technique is to capture people's naturalistic actions, reactions and interactions which is not manipulated as compared to gathering data through interviews which can be manipulated one way or the other. He argues that participant observation is primarily the researcher's take on social action, whereas interview is the participant's take. Thus, by observing people during their routines of daily living, we can supplement the data corpus with another way of knowing (Saldana, 2011). As such, during the course of the study, I employed participant observation assuming the role of a passive observer.

Thus, I observed with the help of my research assistant, the types and intensity of child work and/or labour assigned by parents to children in order to ascertain whether their views on child labour corroborate what was observed. In this regard, I realised that what my interviewees said during the interview process regarding their perspective and interpretation of child labour, and what I observed previously often did not corroborate. In other instances, participant observation functioned as a prelude to interviewing those I wished to speak with regarding what i saw and heard, and what I wanted to know more about.

4.5 Ethical Considerations in the Study

Fossheim (2013) claims that research on or with children is important as a source of knowledge, however, this type of research faces difficulties that are similar and different from research involving adults. Therefore, as researchers embark on data collection, there's a need to respect

the participants, their views and the area of study, its culture and customs pertaining to their belief systems.

In Ghana, and most parts of the world, children under the age of 18 are under the guidance of their parents. Therefore, when conducting research with these underage children, the consent of their parents is needed. During this research process, each child I interviewed I had to seek consent from their children, inquire about the times suitable for the children. Mostly the parents wanted me to do the interviews during the weekends when the children had no school. Further I had to explain the research topic and brief the parents about what the interview will entail and what kinds of questions will be asked.

In addition, I had to guarantee the anonymity of each participant and had to gain their permission to record them during the interview process because that was a research ethic I must adhere to. At the beginning of each interview, I explained what the research was about to the participants, what the data collected was for, and assure them orally of their anonymity and the right to either engage in the interview process, refuse right away or even in the middle of the interview process. The participants intend gave me an oral consent to either carry out the interview or not. During my first interview process, two of the parents agreed to be interviewed, whereas the other parents said they felt uncomfortable speaking in front of other people and were afraid their recorded voices will be used politically. Thus, I had to respect their decision and had to take field notes rather than recording the interview. Due to their decision of not wanting the interview to be recorded, I missed crucial information that could otherwise be captured all on the recorder. Secondly, it took a relatively longer time to interview that particular parent, because I had to stop midway and write what she has previously said in order not to miss some important point, which I did miss in the long run. Lastly, I cannot go back and play any recorded archive of that interview because I have none. For instance, if I want to review

that interview in the future, I have nothing but scribbles of notes to refer to which is quite insufficient.

The participants were also given the chance to refuse or withdraw at any stage of the interview process thus, making the participation in the interview process voluntary. Lastly, because it is a crucial social research ethic that I must protect the anonymity of my respondents, I will use pseudonyms and aliases for my respondents throughout this thesis.

4.5.1 Recruiting Participants

I embarked on my fieldwork from 10th -25th June 2017. I had planned on the communities I wanted to conduct my interview in because those communities were full of diversity. Diversity in terms of the different types of ethnic, religious and economic statuses of the inhabitants.

Secondly, they were communities that spoke my local language Twi (an Akan language spoken by most people in Kumasi). Therefore, It was easy to communicate with respondents and also cost effective because I needed no translator.

I set up early mornings with a friend who acted as my research assistant and travelled through these communities. I need no introduction or the help of any community leader because my interview did not involve them in anyway. Also, I could locate parents all by myself. The only problem was that some of these parents were busy at their shops or doing some house chores and could not find time to sit and talk with me. Therefore, I had to go at a good time for them or make an appointment with them and return the next day for the interview.

4.5.2 My friendly critics

Based on my knowledge and experience during my master's degree program and having critical classmates during the program, I decided to have my own critics to help me in this study. My biggest critic was my mum, who is a teacher and also a researcher. I run all my interview guide, research questions and everything I wrote in this thesis by her. She always came back to asking me if I had run it by my supervisor and what does she thinks. My mum always gave constructive

critics on time management, how to get detailed information from interviews. For instance, the age limit for the children I planned on interviewing was seven (7) years, however during my field studies, I found out that most 7year olds were shy to speak with me and were mostly confused and unfocused during the entire process. Therefore, I talked with my supervisor and decided to bring up the age limit to 10 years.

I also had a friend who was my research assistant and critic throughout the entire research process. My friend suggested the participant observation because most parents told me otherwise and when we observed what their children were doing in terms of work, it was the opposite. We took time to observe the children while interviewing their parents at home during supper time when most children are helping their parents with house chores.

4.6 Brief Presentation of Respondents

A total of eighteen (18) participants were interviewed and observed at the same time with the help of my research assistant. Seven (7) of these participants were children from the ages of ten (10) to fifteen (15) and they were purposively selected. Of the remaining eleven (11) participants, eight (8) were women with children, six (6) were married the remaining two (2) participants were single parents.

Out of these seven (7) children, six (6) were girls and one (1) boy. There were all students in primary and Junior High School. They had all being working mostly at home and just a few of them worked outside their homes.

About three (3) of the women were seamstresses, four (4) were market women and one (1) was a house wife. They were between the ages of 30-45 years of age and as such had a lot of experience with housework and the Ghanaian socialization process of children.

I decided to also interview three (3) stay-at-home dads to increase the reliability and validity of my study. And also make it more inclusive and diverse. More so, the names used in the

following chapters are pseudonyms due to the fact that my respondents wanted to remain anonymous.

4.7 Limitations of the Study

The subjective perspective of child labour and child work in the Ghanaian society may differ from one cultural setting to another. There are about 118 ethnic groups in Ghana. These various ethnic groups have their own forms of socialization process with underlining similarities and differences also. Therefore, generalizing findings based on the data at hand to the entire nation is far-fetched and possibly biased.

Another limitation was that since the language the interview conducted in was *Twi*, (Ghanaian language), some essential things said can get missing during the translation process from *Twi* to English. Further, one of the extensively spoken languages in 'Zongos' is Hausa which I cannot speak and did not have an interpreter. Therefore, some participants could not boldly express themselves and others even refused to participate in the research process due to the language barrier.

I also realised that the use of interviews also proved to be limited on certain levels. I realised most of the responses I received was biased first because I was present, and secondly because the research interview process is not a natural communication exchange compared to participant observation (Berg, 2001). My presence as a researcher had an influence on responses given by interviewees since participants might sometimes tell you what they think you are looking for and would prefer to hear, hence, my decision to include focus group discussions and participant observation in my data collection method for a more neutral and valid responses.

4.8 Strengths of the Study

The study focused on finding out how parents and children in Ghana view and experience what child labour. The accounts of their experiences thus add to the body of knowledge on child labour in sub-Saharan Africa. Particularly, owing to the rather few qualitative studies available

on child labour in Ghana and Africa compared to Asia and other parts of the world, the findings of this study are therefore enriching.

Furthermore, the strength of this study lies in the fact that I had the advantage of being a native of the study area. As a native speaker of the language (Twi), I could thus communicate effectively with study participants which made it also easy for them to convey both verbal and non-verbal sentiments in order to answer the research questions. Moreover, being a native of the area meant that respondents could trust me and speak openly on topics raised since I was considered one of their own.

Finally, data gathered from my field work and this research can help policy makers, child right stakeholders and labour law makers know more about other causes of child labour in Ghana besides poverty. Where the root causes of child labour are known, it could facilitate new ways of thoughts with practical measures put in place to curtail the practice of child labour in Ghana and other African countries.

4.9 Data Analysis

Bryman (2012) contemporary qualitative research helps analyse social problems when theoretical perspectives are employed to understand that problem. These theoretical perspectives or views will help researchers analyse social problems from several angles and lenses. Following this approach, the data gathered will be analysed qualitatively giving a wide spectrum of theoretical perspective on child labour and child work, the social context and socialization processes that have aided the practice of child labour in Ghana. Silverman (1993; p.24) notes that a depiction of qualitative research strategy as one that only produces theory is “out of tune with the greater sophistication of contemporary field research design ...born out of greater concern with issues of reliability and validity”. Therefore, the study sought to answer the research questions put forward in the previous chapter of the study.

Qualitative data gathered from semi-structured in-depth interviews, focused groups discussions

and participant observation were depicted in the research questions and subsequently transcribed to identify theory related material, as well as recurring themes (Bryman, 2012). A theme denotes a set of indicators built on coded notes and transcripts from interviews, identified through data and anchored in research questions that provide the researcher with a theoretical appreciation of data (Bryman, 2013). On this basis, key themes the study elicited during data analysis included ‘child socialization’, ‘culture’, ‘death’, ‘religious beliefs’, social context, , and ‘poverty’. From these themes, I will engage in a critical reflection, analysis and description of my findings.

4.9.1 Pre-analysis process

Since my data was collected using a tape recorder plus written observational notes, a stage of pre-analysis was required. The primary data collected was in my local language ‘Twi’. I listened to it and translated them into English, and with similar responses from respondents, I grouped them into different concepts, theories and ideas. Further since I gathered data from different communities, I also compared the responses I got across those three neighbourhoods, the differences and similarities. I used the themes, concepts and ideas gathered then to analyse my data using existing theories as a yard stick.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the data collected during my fieldwork. In this chapter, the various subjective views, meanings and beliefs associated with child labour will be presented, evaluated with existing theories from the literature review and look for new theories that can emerge from the data collected.

It also endeavours to understand the meanings, taken for granted assumptions, and any other theory upholding the practice of child labour in Ghana. The chapter will also analyse what most parents deem as child labour and child work. By what standards do parents and children in Ghana define child labour compared with the International approved definition of the social phenomenon. Furthermore, through the analysis of the data collected, I looked for similar themes that are depicted in the various responses gathered from both children and parents during the data collection process. These themes will thus help in answering my research questions.

Lastly, I critically analyse the data collected from different cities in Kumasi which are inhabited by people with higher and lower levels of income. The different or shared views they have regarding the social problem. This helped me to critically analyse whether there is a relationship between poverty and child labour. I also further challenge, reflect on and analyse my taken-for-granted assumptions with regards to what child work and child labour is about growing up in Ghana. In summary, the chapter attempts to explore parents and children's thoughts on what constitutes child labour, their experiences and the main causes of child labour and how domestic work may be misconstrued as child labour.

5.2 Culture, Childhood and Child labour

According to Bass (2004) the phenomenon which is child labour does not exist in the African culture. The idea of what Childhood is, is merely a social and cultural construct (Bass, 2004).

Bass (2004) states that there is a socialization process perceived as reality in the African culture that takes no offence in children engaging in work to earn money for themselves or to supplement the household financial budget. The concept of childhood, or what it means to be a child, therefore reflects the particularities of a specific socio-cultural context and thus the effect social context has on childhood is significant (ibid).

Additionally, Bronfenbrenner's (1990) ecological systems theory also defines the complex "layers" of environment and culture each having an effect on a child's development. The interaction between factors in the child's immediate family/community environment, and the societal context and culture steers his development. Therefore, when researchers study children and their socialization process, we must look not only at the child and her immediate environment, but also at the interaction of the larger environment as well.

Considering how children in Ghana experiences child labour in their lives, it is in an African context a way of securing sustenance and training opportunities for its members (Bass, 2004). Bass claims that in an African context child labour is part of a cultural process that has existed throughout history. Therefore, parents whether poor or rich, cannot exclude children from engaging in some sort of work in the household (ibid).

The culture of the socialization process of children in Ghana is through work which takes the form of training for children to learn adult roles, sustain the culture of the Ghanaian society over time (Bass, 2004). The data gathered during my fieldwork indicated the immense power culture had in the continuity of child labour in Ghana. Most parents did not have a clear reason rather than 'it is our culture and a way of socializing our children' when asked why they allowed their children to engage in child labour. They emphasized the importance of upholding the culture that have historically guided the socialization process of the children in Ghana.

A parent when asked why she allows her children to engage in child work at home, this was her response ‘*As a Ghanaian child, it is a sort of rite of passage and a cultural thing, you need to be trained to work as a child. It is part of our culture and culture should not be thrown away - Kumiwaa (39 years mother of 3).*

From the above response by this parent, it is clear that culture makes child work an ‘acceptable training’ which generally means labour for most children in Ghana. This is the reality of what childhood is and this construction of childhood has not been questioned by this parent. This parent’s reason for allowing her children to work at home is because that is the culture and belief system that exist in the community she comes from. Her beliefs and cultural norms regarding how children are to be brought up with regards to work is what she’s adhering to. Further, she has not questioned her preconceived ideas of how childhood and socialization of children with regard to work is. Bass (2004) thus challenges policy makers who seek to help abolish the problem the definition of childhood according to the culture of the particular society in order to make practical and inform decisions on how best the problem can be uprooted.

5.3 Social Context

Context is highly important when researchers’ analysis the causes of social problems (Bacchi, 2006). Therefore, in finding out what is the cause of child labour in Ghana, context should be looked at. Various researches across contexts have been provided regarding what constitutes child labour in Ghana and other African countries. Admassie (2002) states that child labour in Ghana is an intricate phenomenon, a form of socialization deeply rooted in the cultural, social and economic structures of the country. Through the process of socialization, individuals acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions that enable them to participate as more or less effective members of groups and societies (ibid). Similarly, Bass (2004) considers child labour in Ghana as a process of instilling discipline, responsibility and a gateway of producing future leaders that are positive and exemplary leaders for the society. From the above definitions, it

can be deduced that what constitutes child labour in Ghana is based on context which is often bounded by cultural and structural factors that influence how Ghanaians understand and experience the phenomenon in their daily lives. Thus, the study sought to establish the views of sampled women and children in Tafo-Pankrono municipality regarding their understanding of child labour and how they experience it in their daily lives.

To ascertain respondents' perspectives regarding child labour, I started off by asking the parents if they assign their children domestic work at home, the type of domestic work assigned, the circumstances they would allow their children to work outside home for income, as well as their reaction if children declined to do domestic chores or work for an income. Generally, most women sampled for the study were of the view that they assigned their children domestic chores at home from a very young age, in most cases from age four (4) or five (5). Mothers first assign children basic chores such as cleaning, washing, sweeping, and fetching of water for bathing and cooking. Where children are adequately trained in domestic chores particularly cooking, washing and sweeping, it allows mothers the opportunity to be economically engaged for income to support their homes and save for rainy days since the government provided no financial support if one parent dies or is laid off. Most interviewees also claimed that the economic structure of Ghana does not provide any financial support towards a child who parents are deceased, disabled or poor. Thus, children are often used as a future investment and an insurance against future uncertainties in some households in Ghana (Verner & Blunch, 2001; Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997). Bass (2004) claims that when families in most African countries are ripped apart by war, sudden death of parents and other unfortunate events, children are increasingly left behind to fend for themselves. She argues this system coupled with zero support from the government and other local institution has influenced the existence of child labour till date. Countries such as Norway and other welfare states provide some form of welfare benefits for children, the disabled, unemployed, the sick and others who need welfare

support (Nordic Centre for welfare and social issues, 2013). Hence, there is little or no form of child labour practices that have been recorded in recent times (International Labour Organization, accessed Jan.8. 2018).

As argued by Baland and Robinson (2000) cited in Brown, Deardorff & Stern (2002), child labour is a device for transferring assets and a form of security against unforeseen circumstances in countries where the state provides little or no welfare benefits for its needy populace which Ghana is no exception.

Most of my respondents from Ahwiaa-Zongo where majority of the populace fall below the poverty line in Ghana, Binta a 30-year-old married woman with four children said,

“I am the third wife of my husband; my husband is old now and cannot support us financially, so I have to earn money all by myself. With the help of my children taking care of the house, I can peacefully continue my trading business and provide financial support for them”.

As captured above, child labour or engagement in domestic work could thus be perceived as a form of division of labour since it frees parents off domestic duties, increasing time allotted to economic activities such as trading or farming for household livelihood support. This finding is thus in tune with Admassie (2002) notion that among others, child labour is deeply rooted in the economic structures of developing countries due to the possibility for both parents and children to contribute to household and economic productivity.

Moreover, most interviewees also claimed that when families are ripped apart by death, poverty or divorce, children are increasingly left behind to cater for themselves or fortunate enough to be left with their mothers along to cater for them. No external institution such as a welfare support system is set up by the government of Ghana to provide financial support for these children (Bass, 2004). Mostly the extended families may provide some sort of financial support for these children, but at a cost. Children who are taken in by their extended family members should be able to work diligently work alongside schooling to contribute their quota to the

family financial budget (Admassie, 2002). In view of this, most parents willingly or unwillingly push their children into child labour to adequately equip them for future work if such an event occurs (ibid).

One group of respondents were of the view that poverty and adult unemployment in Ghana could push them to allow their children to engage in some form of paid work to support themselves primarily and the family where possible. To such respondents, this form of paid child work does not constitute child labour because of the difference in context between Ghana and other developed countries where economic hardship or poverty is not prevalent.

In a separate interview Salamatu, who is a second wife, with three kids had this to say when asked about how the institutions and economic makeup of the country has make the practice difficult to curtail, *“if my children become orphans, there is no set up institution in Ghana that will provide financial help or any type of help for my kids unlike these European countries. I make my children sell toffees on the streets after school and work part-time on my neighbors’ farm during the weekends to equip them to face life (Auntie Adwoa, mother of 4).*

It was eminent that each of these women allowed their children to engage in child labour because of the fear that after their demise, there would not be any kind of financial support that will support their children’s upkeep. These women are hell bent on ensuring that their children learn hard work in terms of selling on the streets or helping on someone’s farm during the weekends for extra money knowing well that they lived in a country where the provision of financial support from the government for poor children and families is nonexistent.

Most of the respondents attributed the cause of engaging their children in child labour to be because of the country they found themselves. It was not up to them to stop their children from engaging in child labor however, even if they wanted to, it was impossible given the fact that their children will be rendered helpless in case of any unforeseen circumstances.

Therefore, as a social worker embarking on a study like this, I cannot take out the environment or context from what I am studying.

5.4 Child labour as understood and experienced by Ghanaian parents

Respondents both in the Tafo- Pankrono, Ahwiaa -Overseas had similar views on what types of work constitutes child labour and what did not. Whereas responds from Ahwiaa- Zongo also varied as to the types of work associated with both phenomenon.

Most African communities try to bring up children to be strong individuals who are capable of facing much more adversities compared to European children (Nukunya, 2003). Thus, they see that most work done by children are to strengthen them for unforeseen circumstances rather than it been detrimental to their wellbeing (Bass, 2004). Nukunya stresses that an important component of socialization of children especially from Ghana is resiliency and being independent from the onset of their socialization process.

This is evident in the responds received from most parents from my field work. When I asked a mother what types of work she considered child labour, this was her response, *'I don't think any work is too much for the child if you teach them how to do it properly and if they say they can handle it themselves (Auntie Yaa, 36-year-old mother of 3).*

From the above response, it is noted that the understanding of detrimental in terms of work involving children is subjective. Most parents had their own idea what it was based on their socialization and religious beliefs. Bass (2004) explains the root of these retorts to be the effect of a triple heritage found in the African societies. The triple heritage Bass explains is a combination of African culture (the indigenous), Islamic integration and colonial rule put forward by Ali Muzrui. She draws attention to readers to employ this concept to understand the varying ideologies that most Africans have with regards to child labour. She stresses that based on the indigenous ideas surrounding why child labour is eminent, it is because it serves as a form of vocational and moral education (Bass, 2004).

5.5 Revisiting the link between child labour and Poverty

From my field research, many respondents denied the relationship that exists between child labour and poverty. A repeated response that came up when I asked whether they think poverty influences child labour in Ghana was negative.

One respondent Yaa (all names are falsified for anonymity sake) answered; *child labour is not defined by poverty. Whether rich or poor, it is important to let your children work at home. It instils in them discipline and useful life lessons.*

Poverty often at times is argued to have a strong positive relationship with child labour (Brown, Deardorff & Stern, 2002). They argue that the role of family income presently is not so predominant in explaining variations of work done by children in most communities. Nonetheless, there is an undeniable relationship between household expenditure and child labour decisions (ibid).

Verner & Blunch (2001) argue that the relationship between poverty and child labour primarily regarded a well-established fact. Recent research, however, has questioned the validity of this relationship (ibid). They claim that poverty is not the absolute determinant of child labour.

In addition, Nielsen (1998) cited in Verner & Blunch (2001) also disagrees with the assertion that child labour has a positive relationship with poverty. This conclusion came forth due to his study of the determinants of Child labour in Zambia. Thus, raises doubts to claims of poverty having a positive correlation with child labour. He argues that mostly in African societies, the tendency of children engaging in child labour is more indigenous, religious and a part of their socialization process.

Moreover, a strong positive (negative) relation is found between wealth (poverty) and schooling (Verner & Blunch, 2001). The amount of wealth accumulated or owned by a household is found to affect the working decision positively and the schooling decision negatively (ibid). For

example, a Ghanaian family who owns a lot of livestock will increasingly find child labour useful due to the labour intensity of livestock.

Nielsen (1998) and Canagarajah & Coulombe (1997) in their research study titled ‘Child labour and Schooling in Ghana’, found out that the relationship between child labour and poverty in Ghana is mostly ‘U shaped’. Thus, the traditional simplistic ideology of poverty being undeniable positively related to child labour should be questioned. They argued further that this traditional ideology was observed to be very strong in rural areas. It may be due to the prevalence of slack season labour demand patterns in regions where the poor live, or the presence of constraints in terms of other inputs and availability of credit which distort this postulated relationship. However, the significant low effect of welfare on the probability of labour force participation has also been found by Levinson (1991) cited in Canagarajah & Coulombe (1997). These findings and more according to Canagarajah & Coulombe (1997) cast doubts on the traditional, simplistic view that poverty is what mainly pushes children into the labour market.

5.6 Boys and Culture: ‘Doing Gender’ by Zimmerman and West

Zimmerman & West (1998) analyse gender as part of the determinants of roles, allocations of certain chores, attributes, labels and perceptions in most societies which Ghana is no exception. Gender influencing Child labour roles are inseparable (Verner & Blunch, 2001). Likewise, Canagarajah & Coulombe (1997), assert that there exists a gender gap in child labour since girls as a group are found to be more likely to engage in child labour than boys. Moreover, the study found an established gender gap regarding the types of child labour activities performed by children. However, this did not necessarily imply discrimination but rather reflected cultural norms in the study area, in the view of respondents.

In this regard, one of my male interviewees had this to say when asked why house work and child labour favour the boy child rather than the girl child; *'it is our culture; some types of work are traditional fit for a girl and some for the boy'*.

However, this does not necessarily imply discrimination but rather reflect cultural norm (ibid). *'boys and girls have specific chores that are culturally approved for them in our societies. If they deviate from this, they will be labelled and ridiculed,* says a respondent from Ahwiaa-Zongo named Adzo (married with 2 children).

One of my male interviewees, Uncle Ato, married with three children (a boy and two girls) had this to say when asked why house work and child labour favour the boy child rather than the girl child; *'it is our culture; some types of work are traditional fit for a girl and some for the boy.*

According to Zimmerman and West (1998), gender is defined as an achieved status which is constructed through psychological, cultural, and social means. Moreover, the received doctrine of gender socialization theories conveyed the strong message that while gender may be "achieved," by about age five it was certainly fixed, unvarying, and static-much like sex (ibid). In view of the above deductions by Zimmerman and West in their analyses of how gender is somehow fixed and unchangeable according to gender socialization theories. We can use this concept to understand how Ghanaians have defined gender roles for children from ages of 3 and above. In most Ghanaian communities, sex and gender is basically the same, there is no difference between gender and the sex ascribed to a child at birth (Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1998). It is the sex of a child that determines their gender roles and duties as they grow up in a Ghanaian community (Verner & Blunch, 2001).

Furthermore, gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micro political activities that cast pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine natures (Zimmerman & West, 1998). Also, in terms of division of labour and gender roles, it is

undeniable that cultural norms, the socialization process and the discourses that exist in a society shape what gender is (Ibid). Therefore, it is individuals who 'do gender' not the biological makeup of an individual (Zimmerman & West, 1998).

In view of this, we can understand how Ghanaian society and their culture have moulded what types of work a boy or girl can perform. Here, Zimmerman and West (1998) help us to understand how these categorizations come about. They urge readers to analyse gender and gender roles as an outcome of societal laws and beliefs rather than gender being biological.

Moreover, gender is also conceived as an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society (Zimmerman & West, 1998). In the forthcoming chapter, I talk more about what gender means in child labour in a Ghanaian community as explained by my respondents.

5.7 Social Labeling theory

There is a major theme of social labelling theories that runs throughout the responses gathered during my field work studies. According to criminologists and psychologist theorists, all societies have a way of life and anyone who deviates from this accepted way of life is labeled a deviant. Erving Goffman, an American sociologist was one of the most important contributor to this theory. His writings focused mostly on the stigma attached to people who are labelled as deviants. When we analyze both respondents, we can see the stigma that is associated with children who deviates from 'the normal' way of socialization in Ghana. Therefore, to avoid the stigma and labels when children don't engage in work, primarily at home, they tend to accept this assumptions without questioning it (Bass, 2004). This has in one way or the other, uphold and prolonged the existence of child labour in most African communities (ibid).

Labelling theory have three basic assumptions that best summarizes what it is all about. The basic assumptions of labelling theory include: (a) an act or behavior that is exhibited by an

individual that is evaluated, (b) and labeled deviant by a person designated as the labeler, and (c) the individual who exhibits the act (behavior) and who is referred to as the labelee (Wodarski and Dziegielewski, 2004).

Most children in countries where societal norms, beliefs and systems have a strong hold on individual's way of life, are unlikely to deviate from socially accepted way of life (Bass, 2004; Admassie, 2002; Nukunya, 2003). Therefore, if they deviate from this accepted way of life, they are labelled 'deviants'. Children who do not work at home are often labelled deviants in Ghanaian societies (Dzorgbo, 2013). Thus, this study applies 'social labeling' as a concept to look at the effect and constraints it puts on these children. This constraint and the wish of being accepted in our societies, subconsciously influence the way these children behave. For instance, if children are afraid of being disowned, mocked or labelled a 'spoilt brat' when they disobey their parents, they are more likely to conform to whatever their parents tell them to do, which includes child labour. *"if I don't work at home, like the children in my neighborhood, some of my friends' moms will not allow them to play with me. They will say that I am lazy and that they don't want me to negatively influence their children"* Amina (14 years old)

"In our culture, work instils discipline. Therefore, mothers are expected to teach their children this way of life otherwise you will incur a negative label as a bad parent and be shunned among other parents, Auntie Akua (38 years mother of 3).

Auntie Akua and Amina's responses depict how labeling someone a deviant can influence their actions on a social phenomenon. Most parents and children alike continue to engage in child labour practices for fear of being stigmatized and eventually ostracized from their societies. Goffman's theory on social labeling is much concern about how negative labeling induces stigmatization which broods an inferiority complex in the individual, in this case both the parent and child and might one way or the other live a fully satisfied life. In this study most of the children talked about how this stigmatization leads to them not being able to fully function in

their daily activities as happy kids. They would love to play with other children, however most parents will not allow their children to play with them. This situation can lead to many negative outcomes such as depression, low self-esteem, feelings of being unloved, unaccepted and not good enough. As these bad attributes grow within an individual, they grow up with many psychological problems if care is not taken (Abraham et. al. ,2002). They claim that higher levels of stigma associated with negative labels are associated with low self-esteem and higher levels of self-doubt.

Furthermore, the fear of being labeled as either a deviant child for not conforming to culturally accepted ways of how to socialize their children might garner negative labels such as a bad parent, can be used to solidify and prolong the existence of a social problem such as child labour. This is because, child labour in Ghana is often viewed as a way of instilling responsibility, respect, good morals and knowledge of a trade or a way of life for children which is greatly favored (Bass, 2004). Therefore, if parents are not instilling this kind of good qualities which is admired by the society into their children, they and their children are viewed as the ‘black sheep’ of the community. And as such other members of the society fear that they can be negatively influenced by associating with them.

5.7.1 Understanding the effect of the term ‘Ottoolegge’.

‘*Ottoolegge*’ is a Twi word emanating from the Ashanti people of southern Ghana. It literally means a ‘man-woman’. This translates to mean a man who is being used as a woman’s door mat for all things women do. In other words, it can mean a man who has lost sense of his duties, roles and responsibilities as man by doing too much of ‘woman stuff’ such as sweeping, carrying a pan on his head, scrubbing the bathroom for ladies, washing his wife’s underpants and so forth. In a nut shell, there is a social construction of the kind of work that is deemed fitting for a man. As mentioned earlier, we have work that is for women and that for men in the Ghanaian society. Thus, when a woman performs what culture and tradition deems a man’s job (such as

weeding, pounding fufu and all the ‘hard core stuff’ mentioned earlier in the study), the woman is said to be strong and independent in a Ghanaian society. However, if the man does ‘women stuff’, he is called “Ottoolegge”.

Basing on the above, I consider how this social constructionism of gender roles have made it difficult and somehow shameful for boys to engage in any other types of house work other than that which society approves to be for boys. According to some respondents, parents from the onset of socialization of their children in terms of work, will distinguish clearly what types of work are expected of their male or female children. So, it is a ‘taboo’ and shameful when male children are seen doing female work particularly in some cultures. Such findings are in tandem with (Nukunya, 2003) assertion that the social construction of gender roles as well as what constitutes tabooed roles often results in the refusal of some men engaging in activities that will make society question their masculinity.

I further asked my female respondents what they think of boys doing chores such as cleaning and washing. Akosua who is married with two children (a boy and a girl) had this to say; *my husband gets upset. He says I am turning him into a ‘Ottoolegge’*. On further regarding the root cause of the situation, she opined that it could be attributed to the influence of culture and societal construction of what types of work each gender can engage in and the fact that no boy or man wants to be labelled ‘Ottoolegge’.

When we look at how these labels are formed and established, we can use the social constructionist theory which talks about how reality is formed as part of the socialization process of a society. Berger and Luckmann (1966) attribute the reality and norm of societies the end result of what terms and actions have been constructed and made to stay by the people in the society. In this study social construction of reality is applied to understand how the societal norms and culture has constructed an idea of what is normal and real for these children and the parents in Ghana. For instance, the constructed reality of how a child is socialized

properly involves them performing some tasks at home or outside of the house if their parents demand of them. The reality of children in Ghana does not involve them having to argue or disagree with their parents on decisions about work or anything else. Hence, the society these children find themselves have their own construction of their objectives, ideals, reality and the subjective interpretation of what childhood and child work should be.

CHAPTER 6: HOW DO CHILDREN IN GHANA EXPERIENCE CHILD LABOUR IN THEIR DAILY LIVES: NEGOTIATING ROLES, POWER AND SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS?

6.1 Introduction

'Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give.... The child shall enjoy special protection and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally. Spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity... the child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.'

Declaration of the Rights of the Child 1959

'States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.'

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (ratified by 168 countries by the end of 1994).

One of the main focuses of my research study before going to the field was to find out exactly how children and parents understand and experience child labour in Ghana. I wanted to find out how we can make use of the views and ideas of these children to help contribute knowledge to what child labour is. Wyn & White (1997) claims that understanding the realities of young children's lives and how they experience social problems by listening to their views regarding the problem is essential for social work practice. Fook (2002) claims that when social workers involves the people they are helping in the decision-making processes regarding their wellbeing, it empowers them and shows how power is exercised and how that power sharing concept created affects the entire social work practice process.

Another reason behind my decision to interview these young children was to throw more light on how they experienced and understood child labour daily. According to Wyn & White (1997), young peoples' varied circumstances and socialization shape their priorities and perspectives in life. Bacchi (2006) also argues that our socialization, language and perspectives employed to frame a phenomenon influences what we see and how we deal with it. Writing in 2007, Furlong and Cartmel pointed out the importance of taking into account how significant the life experiences of young people have changed. They argue that these new changes have affected all aspects of their lives and thus it is essential for researchers and people working with young people to be aware of these changes when developing new knowledge and practices. Therefore, following this assumption, there is the need for young peoples' voice to be heard in the development of knowledge and practices involving their wellbeing through consultations and discussions (Undp.org, 2016; Bacchi, 2006; Riele, 2006; Wyn & White, 1997). When people working with young children involve them in the decision-making processes, it will enlighten our understanding of risk factors, experiences and also uncover many hidden truths that might help us develop a more grounded knowledge and practices according to each individual's case. Wyn & White (1997) argue that researchers' understanding of the rationale behind a social problem involving children is by welcoming their views and ideas. They stress that it is crucial for researchers to do this because young children are important, and they also reflect the results of political struggles, unemployment and failing social and welfare policies (ibid). Therefore, at the end of each political struggle and poor social policy implementation, young children and the youth are the greatest losers (Wyn & White, 1997).

With this perception in mind, I decided to interview a young boy named Akwasi, a 14year old Junior High School student about his understanding of child labour, this is what he had to say: *child labour is about working outside of my home. Also, when you are forced to work beyond your capacity, that to me is child labour.*

What about working at home, I asked?

Working at home is my duty as a child. if I refuse my mum will punish me.

The study generally established mixed responses with regards to parental responses in instances where children decline to do domestic chores or work for an income. One group of respondents indicated that they often discipline their children by way of corporal punishment especially if they refused to do domestic chores. To them, this instils in them respect for the elderly, the spirit of hard work and responsible adulthood. Such respondents however acknowledged instances where corporal punishment such as caning or flogging meted by parents rather hardened the stance of children against performing domestic work duties. On the other hand, another section of respondents was of the view that in instances where children declined to do domestic chores or work for an income, they had to plead with their kids and/or make assurances of buying gifts in return for fulfilling domestic duties. This could build trust and mutual respect between parents and children in instances where promises are kept, or gifts bought for children in appreciation for domestic work done or income earned through paid labour.

I decided also to look at the power dynamics that exists between the Ghanaian parent and their child and how it affected how they experience child labour daily. Therefore, I asked Akwasi, a 15-year-old boy his views on whether he can say no to his parents when asked to engage in child labour, he responded, I cannot say no to my parent when asked to engage in child labour; *‘I will be punished and maybe my parents might stop providing financial support for my upkeep’*.

When I asked Amina, a 14-year-old girl the same question, this was her response’ *“I can’t say no to my parents when I am asked to work? They have power over what I do with my life until I marry”*. Amina (14year old girl).

Looking at the responses I received during my interview with both children, I realized the power dynamics that exist between the Ghanaian child and their parents at home. This power is given to Ghanaian parents by the society, societal norms, political structures and religious structures of Ghana (Dzorgbo, 2013, Nukunya, 2003). Therefore, it is uncommon for children in Africa to defy what their parents tell them to do (Nukunya, 2013). That is the norm and as such deviating from the norm is frowned on in African societies (Nukunya, 2013; Bass, 2004).

The understanding of power inequalities and a commitment to the empowerment of the powerless people in our societies which includes children is the cornerstone of modernist critical social work approaches (Fook, 2010). As social workers entrusted to help children in societies that make them vulnerable, the dynamics of power in that society needs to be analyzed and understood. From the socio-cultural make up of Ghana, it can be assumed that the power dynamics is structural, which Fook (2010) says it is the most important type of power. The immense level of power parents have on their children has become the nuisance that is preventing most children from saying no to their parents when asked to perform chores that are detrimental to their wellbeing (Bass, 2004; Verner & Blunch, 2000).

The relative "power" of household members and the control of income by parents play a central role in shaping household decisions and duty roles.

6.2 The Strength found in Child labour

I was so shocked when I listened to the views, ideas and perceptions of strength these children said they gained from engaging in child work and child labour. *"I am resilient, hardworking and focused in life more than my friends who were not allowed to work at home". Child labor has made me stronger, responsible and a hardworking young teenager, Serwaa (15year old girl).*

This young lady was my first interviewee when I started my field work. She was very tiny, so I expected not so much from her with regards to her experiencing any form of child labour or

child work. However, I was so surprised with regards to what I heard from her. When I heard these words from this 15-year-old girl, the theory that came into mind was the strength perspective. There is strength in everything that happens to these children. Their parents and the socialization process in Ghana have embedded in them the strength of working from childhood and thus, it has become their taken for granted assumptions without questioning them. As most children engage in child labour, it builds character, instils in them a sense of responsibility, hard work ethics, independence which empowers and prepare them for future uncertainties (Bass, 2004).

The strength perspective is an approach in social work practice which focuses on the self-determination, power and resilience that is embedded in individuals even as they go through challenging faces in life. The strength perspective touches on social work ideals such as empowerment, resilience and self-respect (Healy, 2014). The work of Erving Goffman in 1991 on social labeling, stigma and marginalization brought to light how many of the theories adopted by human service institutions and professions working with people contributed to the problems they were intended to overcome (Healy, 2014). Hence Saleebey (2012) cited in Healy (2014) advocated that social workers and professions in human service should find capacities, strengths rather than failures, stigma and negativity when addressing people in this situation.

Resilience and empowerment can emanate from trauma, childhood difficulties and difficult life events (Healy, 2014). In the face of adversities or social problems such as a child labour, when analyzed through the lens of strength perspective, we can find that these children are groomed into handling unforeseen circumstances such as death of parents or poverty as put forward by the parents during my field work. As social workers, we tend to focus on perceptions of service users' problems, deficits, while ignoring their strengths and resources (Healy, 2014). When children are made to work, they are taught the benefit of hard work, morals, humility and the benefit of engaging in decent work.

Adjo focused on how she will be able to survive and take care of her younger siblings when faced with any unforeseen circumstances in a country where welfare does not exist. Furthermore, she was proud that is she capable of doing something to help her parents after all their love and support toward her. She felt a sense of responsibility toward her siblings and the fact that she is given the chance to show her strength and capacity as a young girl.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This thesis discussed and analysed how children and parents in Ghana experience child labour daily, their preconceived ideologies regarding child work and questioning the norms and ethics governing the Ghanaian society with regards to how children are to be socialized. Firstly, the study gathered data from children regarding the types of work they performed at home or outside of their homes. Be it rendering services freely for members of their household or engaging in economic activities to earn extra income for themselves or to support the household budget. This study also explored the power dynamics that exists between a parent and their child that can push the child into child labour. Further the systems, context and socialization process and their influence on the types of child work the child engages in was also analysed.

Secondly the study also gathered data from parents about how they understood child labour, their views and preconceived ideologies regarding the practice was also looked at.

The study used several theories to make sense and analyse the data. The social construction of reality, systems theory and social context gave an in-depth understanding of child labour by taking a holistic approach in understanding the person in environment, the influence the societal norms, belief systems, culture, institutions and context influence the existence of child labour. Likewise, social construction of reality theory also provided a means of understanding the internalization of culture, norms and societal values that the individual is socialized with. How the internalization of these societal constructs becomes a part of how parents and children understand and experience child labour in Ghana. The study also analyse how gender influences the types of work children are culturally allowed to engage in. The negative attributes garnered when children refuse to engage in child work.

7.2 New knowledge

During my data analysis, my main finding was that poverty is not the main cause of child labour in Ghana. Moreover, the view of poverty having a positive relationship with child labour warranted a debate. Poverty in some cases pushed children into engaging in child labour but not child work. According to Boozer & Suri (2001), the assumption of poverty directly affecting child labour is not evident in the Ghanaian society and as such policies deemed at alleviating poverty in order to eradicate child labour will be unsuccessful. Most interviewees agreed that the main cause of child labour was because it was part of their societal reality and a form of socialization process.

Bass (2004) attributes the importance of culture and social context in shaping the definition and perception of child labour in Ghana. I found out that this view was accurate through the data I gathered and analysed in this study. During my interview process, most parents were of the view that there was nothing like child labour that existed in Ghana. They viewed child labour activities such as child prostitution, robbery and child slavery as child labour and work that is detrimental to the wellbeing of children. Therefore, children engaging in part-time petty trading was not child labour but a form of socialization process.

7.3 New areas for further research

Throughout my research journey, I found out that many literatures on child labour attributed the prevalence of child labour in Ghana and most African countries to be a product of poverty. There was no literature which looked at child labour as part of the socialization process of the Ghanaian child. Most literature had no empirical data which assessed child labour as a product of culture, norms and societal systems. Additionally, most parents and children in Ghana also talked about the advantages of child labour, which I found no literature on. Therefore, I would recommend that there should be more research on these areas and how they influence the existence of child labour in Ghana.

7.4 Recommendations for Social Work practice

As a researcher, who has studied Sociology and Social Work both at the undergraduate and graduate levels of education, I have acquired knowledge in understanding social problems, culture, context, socio-economic structures and so on. Concepts of empowerment, respect, inclusion, acceptance, compassion and empathy are some of value ethics the social worker deems important when dealing with clients. Whether clients are old or young, social workers are expected to accord to them the same treatment, respect, consideration and value as per social work ethics.

The socialization process, experiences and lives are crucial to nation building, social justice and effective strategies for child welfare and development policies, and effective citizenry (Iwasaki, 2016). In view of this, children are to be treated with special care, love and protection against any form of act that is and can be detrimental to their overall welfare. The understanding of child work and child labour from the social context of the child, taking into account the norms, culture, religion and beliefs of the child is fundamental to the negotiation of new ways in combating the social phenomenon. Therefore, a step towards this new beginning according to Powers & Allaman (2012) is through participatory action research which allows every person's knowledge and story to count. They stress that the involvement of people of interests in participatory action research is empowering, respecting, effective and a dynamic tool which will help leverage individual's unique perspectives in re-defining what child labour is and in so doing, Folleso (2015) claims that we may find new terms and solutions that are inclusive, empowering and fitting for all persons from different walks of life.

Furthermore, there are problems with the obvious solution of abolishing child labor says Verner & Blunch (2001). First, there is no international agreement defining child labour (ibid). Boozer & Suri (2001) claims countries not only have different minimum age work restrictions, but also have varying regulations based on the type of labour. This makes the limits of child labor very

ambiguous. Most would agree that a six-year-old is too young to work, but whether the same can be said about a twelve-year-old is debatable. Until there is global agreement which can isolate cases of child labor, it will be very hard to abolish. There is also the view that work can help a child in terms of socialization, in building self-esteem and for training (Collins 1983). The problem is, then, not child labor itself, but the conditions under which it operates (Boyden 1991

Lastly, non-governmental organizations, governmental bodies, researchers and human service workers such as social workers should work together to formulate new ideas of combating this social problem. In Ghana, organizations such as UNICEF have come up with plans and visions that are looking to be implemented. Current knowledge of the impact of various activities on children's well-being is not sufficient to suggest appropriate measures that can address the fundamental causes of child labour within each social context. Therefore, given the knowledge gap in this area, as well as the policy concern that child labour due to child work activities rather than economic activities requires a different set of interventions, the natural next step would be the inclusion of some child work activities that put strain on the wellbeing of the child, their education and health, in the definition of child labour (Unicef, 2018)

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APPENDIX 1-INTERVIEW GUIDE

Unstructured In-depth interview guide for Children

1. Can you tell me about yourself? Your name, where you live, age, are you a student?
2. Do you perform any chores at home? If yes,
3. What kinds of household chores do you perform at home and at what times must you perform these chores?
4. Who normally asks you to perform these chores? Can you decline to do these chores when asked? If no, Why?
5. How do these chores impact on your day to day life as a child?
6. what is your opinion regarding the benefits and drawbacks of these chores?

Unstructured In-depth Interview guide for parents

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself? What is your level of education, age and occupation, married or single, number of children etc.
2. Do your children do some work at home or outside home, if yes, can you tell me the kinds of work they usually do?
3. In your opinion what kind of work will you allow them to do and which ones would you not allow and why?
4. In what situation would you allow your children to work outside of the house to earn income?
5. How will you respond if your child refused to work at home or outside home?
6. In your opinion what are the advantages and drawbacks of children working in or out of the home?

